
I. INITIATIVES

A. Initiative Title

Establish single state e-government portal for integrated service delivery.
Implement state standards for access to electronic services.

B. Initiative Leader

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C. Summary

The unprecedented growth of the Internet as a medium for conducting business transactions and accessing information has led the public to reasonably expect similar online interaction with state government. As the primary gateway to online state information and services, it is essential that INFO Louisiana be appropriately structured to provide access to the full spectrum of services and resources offered by state government. There are two key goals of the restructuring. The first is to establish a design model, based on industry Best Practices, that can be replicated to enhance the 'look and feel' and seamless navigation among the individual agency Web sites. The second goal is to provide the management environment for hosting the model so that information can be updated immediately by the data owner and sites can be rapidly updated to reflect process and organizational changes.

D. Description of the Initiative

This initiative addresses the establishment of a single state portal for integrated service delivery on the World Wide Web and implementation of state standards for access to electronic services. The goal is to enhance delivery of state services on the Internet.

The Internet currently houses a large amount of state data and services. However, the formats and structures of the state sites are inconsistent, making the access to services difficult. In order to attract customers and to encourage their continued use of services provided, the state's Web sites will be consolidated and

restructured to the perspectives, experiences, and needs of the customer. Moreover, this will be done in a manner that is visually appealing and efficient. To acquire new customers unfamiliar with the Internet, a consistent format in appearance as well as manner of use is necessary. These techniques are also important for customers experienced in use of the Web who already have expectations that must be met order to maintain their business.

Key aspects of this initiative are:

- Consolidated single entry point for all Web-based state services.
 - Provides an easily located point of entry.
 - Provides one point from which all categories of sublevels may be found.
- Logical structuring of Web pages geared to the perspectives and needs of the customers.
 - Facilitates customer location of services and information by grouping pages according to a logical function category as opposed to government structure (i.e. function/service type approach versus agency structure).
 - Facilitates state maintenance of Web pages for maximum currency of content.
- Seamless look and feel across all state Web pages with standardized formats and navigation.
 - Clearly identifies each page as part of the state Web site.
 - Increases ease of use with consistent placement of navigation buttons and other actions or instructions on each page.
 - Decreases learning curve of the public in the use of state Web pages.
 - Allows consistent application of Best Practices for efficiency and usability.
 - Promotes effective transfer of information from Internet to customer through optimal and consistent formats.

Anticipated outcomes from this initiative are:

- Improved delivery of information and services to citizens
 - A well-organized consolidated Web site structured for optimal use by the public
 - Available at any time from any location with electronic access
- Better public image for the State of Louisiana
 - Timely, more comprehensive offering of state information and services
 - Visually appealing standardized format for Web pages.
- More efficient delivery of state services
 - Increased use of the state's Web pages by the public due to ease of use.
 - Decreased reliance on paper transfer of information and services provided on the Web.
 - Increased efficiency in Web page access and processing due to application of Best Practices.

- Templates, standards and guidelines for Web page development and modification providing easier and more consistent maintenance.

The users to be served with this initiative encompass all who may have an interest in the State of Louisiana and access to Internet technology. Customers will include the following:

- Louisiana citizens desiring state information or services.
- State employees performing state business.
- Businesses wishing conduct state transactions
- Government officials – state, parish, municipality, etc.
- Contractors wishing to do business with the state.
- Students.
- Out of state public wishing to visit or learn about Louisiana.

Best Practices will be used consistent with Standards and Guidelines as developed by LA Connections, Goal IV, Architecture Initiatives 1.

Some examples of services that should become more easily accessible to the public as a result of this initiative are:

- Administrative Code and Louisiana Register; Revised Statutes
- Birth, Death, Marriage Certificates – ordering information
- Business Licenses – First Stop Shop
- Capital Outlay and Facilities Management
- Census Information
- Corporations; Uniform Commercial Code
- Driver's License Information; Vehicle Registration Online
- Employee Information (state employee service site links)
- Facts and Information about Louisiana; Maps; Calendar of Tourism Events; Tour Guide
- Health and Hospitals Licensing Information
- Lottery
- Publications
- Purchasing and Procurement; Bidder's List and Contractor Registration; Commodity Contracts
- Resources on Aging
- Sex Offender/Child Predator Registry Search
- TOPS and Tuition Help
- Unclaimed Property Search
- Veteran's Affairs Information
- Weather

E. Participating Partners and Stakeholders

- Louisiana Data Base Commission
- Other participating agency partners
- Division of Administration
 - Office of the Data Base Commission
 - Office of Information Services
 - All Sections
- Contractor

F. Benchmarking Partners and/or Best Practice References

Several other states have recently incorporated aspects of this initiative. The States of Utah, Washington and Idaho have developed a Web sites related to the vision behind this initiative and may be viewed as a benchmarks. These state Web sites provide a single portal into the state's pages and home pages that appear to be structured to optimum usability by the public most in need of the information and services provided. They load quickly, navigate efficiently, and are formatted consistently, simply and pleasingly

State of Washington Portal Page - "@ccess Washington"

<http://access.wa.gov/>

Washington also has a Department of Information Service, who assists with implementation and staffing of the portal page, including - but not limited to - policy and procedure support. Very organized, user friendly in the delivery of online services.

State of Utah - "eUtah"

<http://www.state.ut.us/>

Very well constructed page of policies and procedures along with guidelines for linking to their site.

State of Idaho

<http://www.state.id.us>

This evolving Web site is migrating to a new portal concept.

One significant area of difference between the Washington and Louisiana implementations may be the use of pop-up submenus to drill down to specific Web pages of interest. Washington uses this feature very effectively. High-end current browsers are needed to use this feature or alternative methods for older browsers.

G. Assessment of Risks

The single most critical success factor for this initiative is the effective establishment of a single portal into the State of Louisiana Web pages with a very logical and function oriented structure established from that home page. Easy and

clear navigation to the services and information most desired by the public is key to a successful state Web site. Almost as important as the single entry with a clear structure, is consistency among all individual Web pages, including appearance, navigation and method of use. This aspect is crucial to the ease of use within the Web site. Customers must not only be able to find what they are looking for, but also use the pages easily for services and for obtaining information.

The greatest risks to this initiative are the sheer volume of the information already on the state's Web pages and the difficulty in organizing so much information into a more usable structure. In addition, state resources and the time required to convert existing pages to the new format will be significant. Finally, if the new format is to extend beyond the main portal and the Division of Administration, as is hoped, implementation by other state departments, who may already have heavy investments in an existing complex site, will have to be negotiated or mandated.

II. PROJECT INFORMATION

A. Project Description

One project has been established in support of this initiative. It is the INFO Louisiana Redesign Project which consists of three phases:

1. Contractor development phase (development of a new design with templates, standards and procedures, and conversion of selected pages).
2. Independent Division of Administration implementation phase (conversion of existing DOA pages to the new format by state staff using the contractor templates).
3. Extend the design to other participating state agencies.

The INFO Louisiana Redesign Project is being initiated with a contract at the Office of Data Base Commission with participation by the Office of Information Services. The goal of the contract is to restructure INFO Louisiana and the Divisions' Web pages in order to better position the state to bring government information and services to the people electronically. This will be done by establishing a design model, based on industry Best Practices, that can be replicated to enhance the 'look and feel' and seamless navigation among the individual agency Web sites. Important features of the design are the capability for agencies to immediately update time-critical information and to rapidly modify their web sites to reflect process and organizational changes. Key deliverables are:

- Site Design Description
- Standards and Guidelines
- Library of Reusable Icons
- Conversion of primary INFO Louisiana pages and selected DOA pages.
- Training Materials

In Phase 2, following completion of the INFO Louisiana Redesign, conversion of DOA pages not within the scope of the contract will take place. These conversions will be performed by the DOA Section Webmasters. The DOA Web Coordinator and State Webmaster will provide guidance to section Webmasters.

In Phase 3, when the conversion of DOA pages begins, several other state agencies are prepared to adopt the new design as a strategy for enhancing their Web sites. The State Webmaster will assist other agencies with the conversion process.

B. Technical/Conceptual Approach

1. Technology/Concept:

The Contractor and Division of Administration staff will assess the structural requirements of the state Web site and develop a menu and navigation system that will provide a customer-oriented organization of the Web pages with flexible and efficient access. The Contractor will develop templates that will allow, as far as possible, the dynamic update of Web page content by non-technical staff. They will also document standards and guidelines for the Web pages and develop training materials instructing the use of the templates.

The choice of contractor implementation for the INFO Louisiana Redesign was made in order to take advantage of specialized experience in this relatively new field that requires both Internet technology familiarity and graphics design skills. This expertise is not readily available in DOA technical staff which is already otherwise committed.

The technology to be employed in producing the Web page templates consists of the following:

- Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML)
- Cold Fusion
- SQL Server

Some of the Best Practices to be incorporated into the new design are:

- Multiple navigational paths
- Accessibility for the disabled
- Sophisticated search engines
- Consistency of appearance
- Feedback on pages
- Efficiency in display through judicious use of graphics

Once the templates and the initial conversions are completed, state DOA Webmasters will use the procedures and templates to convert the remainder of the DOA pages. Since the main portal and the high profile INFO Louisiana pages, along with some key DOA pages, already will have been converted, the remaining DOA section pages may be completed in a phased manner considering available resources and complexity of the pages.

The new design templates will not only provide a new look for existing Web pages, but also the means to develop additional pages that are consistent in format and practice. Maintenance and growth of the Web site will be facilitated with structure, format, standards and guidelines. Further, with the incorporation of

Best Practices within the new design templates, greater volume of use will be supported with ease.

The DOA Web Coordinator will be responsible for keeping abreast of changes in Internet technology and Best Practices in order to work with the State Webmaster to initiate update of the INFO Louisiana technology and structure as appropriate.

2. *Integration with Existing Technologies:*

This project will use a number of resources already in place. The Web servers are established, as is the server software supporting HTML. The content of INFO Louisiana is largely established, requiring only reorganization and some enhancement. Further, basis for the reorganization is already partially available in the services and other topic listings found on INFO Louisiana.

Cold Fusion and SQL Server software is being acquired to support the new technology required for templates that will provide dynamic update of content as well as additional interactive processes.

C. **Implementation Approach**

1. *Project Timetable:*

Task	Deliverable	Start	Complete
Phase 1 – Contract			
Requirements Collection and Analysis		3/17/00	4/28/00
Web Site Design	Site Design Description	4/28/00	6/19/00
Web Site Implementation	Launch New Web Site Web Templates	6/19/00	7/17/00
Documentation and Training	Standards and Guidelines Icon Library Training Materials	7/17/00	8/7/00
Phase 2 – Remaining DOA Implementation			
Convert Group 2 Sections		8/7/00	10/31/00
Convert Group 3 Sections		11/1/00	3/31/01
Phase 3 – Other participating Agencies			
Assist participating Agency conversions		8/7/00	ongoing

2. *Project Resources:*

The Project Team will be composed of the following:

State Staff:

- INFO Louisiana Webmaster (INFO Louisiana content and structure analyst)
- Office of Information Services Manager (Web technical environment and support specialist)
- Division of Administration Web Coordinator (DOA content and structure analyst)
- DOA Section Web Coordinators

Contractor:

- Project Manager
- Technical Personnel
- Graphics Designer

3. *Project Implementation:*

A design prototype will be produced by the contractor for state review and approval during the design phase of the contract. Only a portion of the DOA pages will be implemented by Contractor within the scope of their contract, but full implementation within the Division of Administration by DOA Section Web Coordinators will follow immediately. While the restructuring of INFO Louisiana will be complete, the implementation of state standards and the new format may best be considered an ongoing project. Although they will be adopted by the INFO Louisiana primary pages and the Division of Administration pages, continued monitoring and review to ensure proper implementation will be necessary as Web sites of state departments convert to the new format and standards.

D. **Project Cost Estimate**

FUNDING REQUESTED

Phase 1 (the contract portion) of this project is being fully funded by the Office of Data Base Commission. Phase 2 will employ state resources already allocated and in place. Additional hardware and software being acquired is being funded by the Office of Information Services. No other sources of funding will be used.

<u>Funding Category</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>Funding Received</u>
Hardware/Software	\$35,000	\$35,00
Professional Services	<u>38,500</u>	<u>38,500</u>
Total	\$73,500	\$73,500

